U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

NIH Center for Scientific Review

NIH Review: Insights for Established Investigators

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NCI Division of Cancer Biology
17th Annual New Grantee Workshop

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NIH . . . Turning Discovery Into Health

NIH's mission is to seek fundamental knowledge about the nature and behavior of living systems and the application of that knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce illness and disability.

Peer Review and Funding of NIH Grant Applications

National Institutes of Health

Center for Scientific Review
Assigns to NIH Institute and Peer Review Group

Study Section
Reviews for Scientific Merit

Institute
Evaluates for Relevance to Research Priorities

Advisory Council or Board
Recommends Action

Institute Director
Takes Final Action

Assignment to CSR Study Sections

Within an IRG, applications are assigned to:

Standing Study Sections

- When subject matter of application matches the referral guidelines for the study section or

Special Emphasis Panels (SEPs)

- When the subject matter does not fit into any study section
- When assignment of an application to the most appropriate study section creates a conflict of interest
- When certain types of grants are sought (e.g., fellowships, SBIRs, AREAS)

Help Your Application Get to the Right Study Section



Find a Study Section

Applications are reviewed in Study Sections (Scientific Review Group, SRG). Integrated Review Groups (IRGs) are clusters of Study Sections based on scientific discipline.

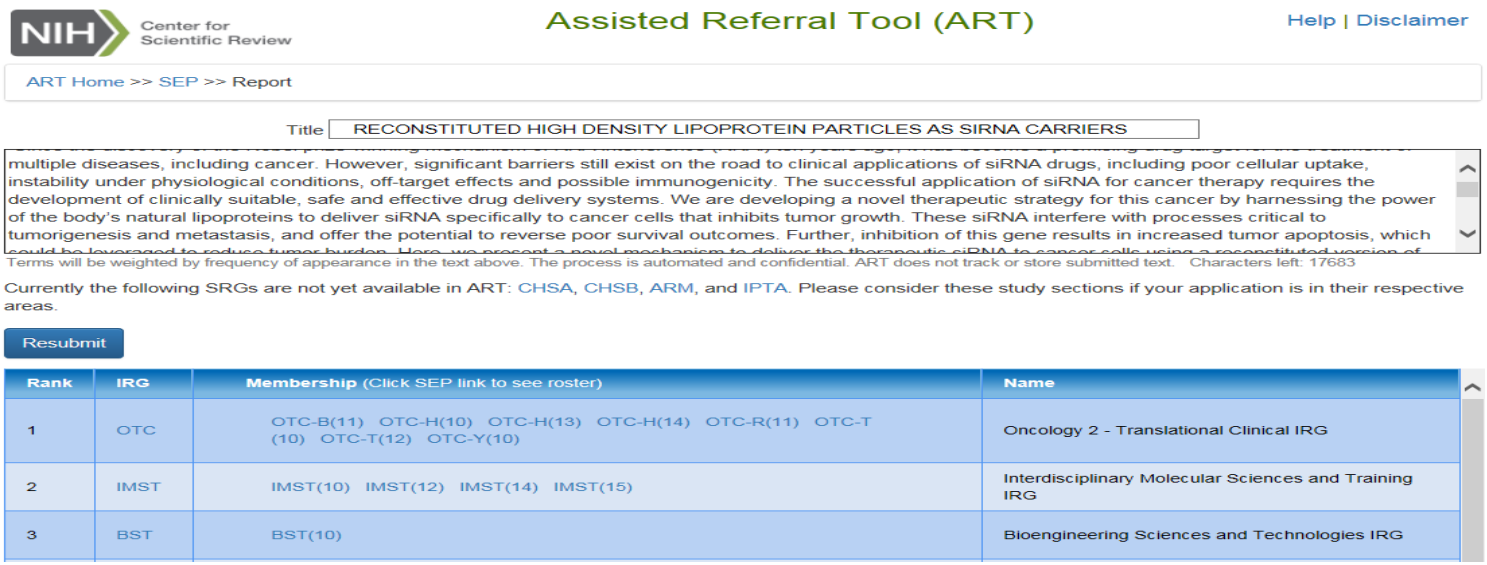
Enter Search Keywords

Go

http://www.csr.nih.gov/

Assisted Referral Tool (Art)

Enter application text and get a list of relevant study sections



https://art.csr.nih.gov

Assignment Request Form (ARF)

Requests for IC assignment

Requests for review group assignment

Identify conflicts

Suggest expertise

View Burden Statement

PHS Assignment Request Form

OMB Number: 0925-0001
Expiration Date: 10/31/2018

Funding Opportunity Number:

Funding Opportunity Title:

Awarding Component Assignment Request *(optional)*

If you have a preference for an Awarding Component (e.g., NIH Institute/Center) assignment, please use the link below to identify the most appropriate assignment then enter the short abbreviation (e.g., NCI for National Cancer Institute) in "Assign to/Do Not Assign To Awarding Component" sections below. Your first choice should be in column 1. All requests will be considered, however, locus of review is predetermined for some applications and assignment requests cannot always be honored.

Information about Awarding Components can be found here: https://grants.nih.gov/grants/oths_assignment_information.html#Awarding Components

	1	2	3
Assign to Awarding Component			
Do Not Assign to Awarding Component			

Study Section Assignment Request *(optional)*

If you have a preference for a study section assignment, please use the link below to identify the most appropriate study section then enter the short abbreviation for that study section in "Assign to/Do not Assign to Study Section" sections below. Your first choice should be in column 1. All requests will be considered, however, locus of review is predetermined for some applications and assignment requests cannot always be honored.

For example, you would enter "CAMP" if you wish to request assignment to the Cancer Molecular Pathobiology study section or enter "ZRG1 HDMR" if you wish to request assignment to the Healthcare Delivery and Methodologies SBIR/STTR panel for informatics. Be careful to accurately capture all formatting (e.g., spaces, hyphens) when you type in the request.

Information about Study Sections can be found here: https://grants.nih.gov/grants/oths_assignment_information.html#Study Section

	1	2	3
Assign to Study Section *Only 20 characters allowed*			
Do Not Assign to Study Section *Only 20 characters allowed*			

PHS Assignment Request Form

List individuals who should not review your application and why *(optional)* — *Only 1000 characters allowed*

Identify Scientific areas of expertise needed to review your application *(optional)*
Note: Please do not provide names of individuals

	1	2	3	4	5
Expertise *Only 40 characters allowed*					

Cover Letter

You can use a cover letter to:

- Explain why your application is late
- Provide notice of plans to submit a video
- Identify your project as generating large-scale genomic data
- Provide pre-approvals ($500k, conference grants)

You should NOT use a cover letter to:

- Make assignment requests (use the ARF!)
- Suggest specific reviewers (never do this!)

What Reviewers Look for in Applications

- Significance and impact
- Exciting ideas
- Clarity
- Ideas they can understand -- Don’t assume too much
- Realistic aims and timelines -- Don’t be overly ambitious
- Brevity with things that everybody knows
- Noted limitations of the study
- A clean, well-written application

Four Rigor and Transparency Review Elements

Research Project Grant Applications

Can Affect Your Overall Impact Score!

Rigor and Transparency Element	What's added to the review criteria?	Where in the application?
1. Scientific Premise	Is there a strong scientific premise or foundation for the project?	Research Strategy (Significance)
2. Scientific Rigor	Are there strategies to ensure a robust and unbiased approach?	Research Strategy (Approach)

Four Rigor and Transparency Review Elements

Projects with Vertebrate Animals and/or Human Subjects

Can Affect Your Overall Impact Score!

Rigor and Transparency Element	Where in the application?	What's added to the review criteria?
3. Consideration of Relevant Biological Variables, Such as Sex	Research Strategy (Approach)	Are adequate plans to address relevant biological variables, such as sex, included for studies in vertebrate animals or human subjects?

NIH's Resubmission Policy

After an unsuccessful new (A0) application or an unsuccessful resubmission (A1) application, you may submit a new (A0) application with the same idea as long as your summary statement has been issued.

NIH Guide Notices

- NOT-OD-14-074
- NOT-OD-14-082

Resubmission FAQs

http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/resubmission_q&a.htm

Your New Application Must Be Written as New

Your new (A0) application should not contain information that might bias the review or provide a competitive advantage:

You Cannot Refer to a Previous Review

- No mention of previous score
- No mention of previous reviewer comments
- No mention of how the A0 is responsive to previous review
- No marks in text to indicate changes

You Cannot Submit Elements of a Renewal

- No Progress Report
- No Progress Report Publication List

CSR Study Sections: The Meeting

- Each CSR standing Study Section has ~12-22 regular members plus temporary reviewers from the scientific community
- About 70 applications are usually reviewed by each study section in 1-2 day meetings

Where Do We Find Reviewers?

- Successful applicants
- Recommendations from reviewers and NIH staff
- NIH RePORTER (http://projectreporter.nih.gov/reporter.cfm)
- Internet
- Scientific conferences
- Volunteers

Reviewer Conflicts of Interest (COI)

What Constitutes a Reviewer COI?

- Institutional
- Family member/close friend
- Collaborator
- Longstanding scientific disagreement
- Personal bias
- Appearance of conflict

http://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer/peer_coi.htm

Confidentiality in Review

- Review materials and proceedings of review meetings represent privileged information for reviewers and NIH staff.
- At the end of each meeting, reviewers must destroy or return all review-related material.
- Reviewers should not discuss review proceedings with anyone except the SRO.
- Questions concerning review proceedings should be referred to the SRO.
- Applicants should never communicate directly with any members of the study section about an application.

At the Meeting

Order of Review

- The average of the preliminary Overall Impact score from the assigned reviewers determines the review order
- Discussions start with the application with the best average preliminary Overall Impact score.
- Discussions focus on the best applications

Clustering of Review

- New Investigator R01 applications are clustered
- Clinical applications & other mechanisms may be clustered (n ≥ 20)

At the Meeting: Application Discussion

Not Discussed Applications

- About half the applications will be discussed
- Applications unanimously judged by the review committee to be in the lower half are not discussed
- The panel will discuss any application a reviewer wants to discuss
- Not discussed applications will only have assigned criterion scores

Discussed Applications

- Any member in conflict with an application leaves the room
- Reviewer 1 introduces the application and presents critique
- Reviewers 2 and 3 highlight new issues and areas that significantly impact scores
- All members without a conflict are invited to join the discussion and then vote on the final overall impact score

Scoring

9-point score scale is used to provide:

- Criterion Scores for each of the 5 core review criteria
- Overall Impact/Priority Score based on but not a sum of the core criterion scores plus additional criteria

All applications receive scores:

- Not discussed applications will receive only initial criterion scores from the three assigned reviewers.
- Discussed applications also receive an averaged overall impact score from eligible (i.e., without conflicts of interest) panel members.

Become a Reviewer

- **Contact a CSR Scientific Review Officer:** Send them your CV
- **Let Us Try to Find a Good Review Group for You:** Send your CV to csrvolunteer@mail.nih.gov

www.csr.nih.gov/review4CSR